



Inside Ag

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The Private Applicator Program

What Are The Goals?

The Private Applicator Program is part of The Division of Plant Industry and has three goals:

1. to prevent adverse human health effects related to pesticide exposure;
2. protection of the environment from harm caused by improper use or disposal of pesticides; and
3. to minimize the risk of damage to property and crops.

These goals are met through education, assistance, licensing, and enforcement of the Worker Protection Standard.

Licensing

Agricultural producers (farmers, nurserymen, foresters, or greenhouse operators) who need to purchase and apply restricted use pesticides must be licensed as a private pesticide applicator. To license, request the private applicator exam and manual from Carol at 303-239-4186. The spring 'rush' is coming soon- so avoid waiting until the last minute and request those exams as soon as possible. If you are one of the 500 folks who already have their exam but just haven't finished it- don't wait. Once January arrives, we will receive more and more exams to grade and licenses to issue and our processing time will slow down accordingly.

What is the Worker Protection Standard?

The Worker Protection Standard (WPS) is a federal regulation designed to protect agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. It defines the obligations that agricultural producers have in regards to protection of employees from the potential harm of pesticide use. If you are an agricultural producer, use pesticides, and employ non-family members, then you must comply with Worker Protection Standard.

Education and WPS compliance assistance

Colorado State University has partnered with us to provide educational workshops training employers on the elements of worker protection and how to train their employees ('Train-the-Trainer'). As part of the private applicator program's WPS compliance assistance efforts, our inspectors will 'walk through' the WPS components with growers one-on-one, helping them understand and meet these important federal requirements for worker safety. Visits involve inspectors interviewing growers and assessing the level of WPS compliance. Our inspectors then help growers become compliant by giving advice and distributing of various resources.

What are we seeing?

In 2008, our inspectors, were out visiting with growers from all over the State, The three most common lapses in the WPS compliance were pesticide safety training, requirements for the central posting of information, and the decontamination requirement specific for pesticide handlers.

Pesticide Safety Training - to provide information to your workers and handlers on how to protect themselves from pesticide residues that may be on the plants or in the soils where they are working, and how to prevent these residues from following them home to their families.

For a grower to be compliant in the Pesticide Safety Training section of the WPS:

1. A qualified trainer must conduct the training. To be considered a qualified trainer, you must be a licensed applicator, (Licensed Private Applicator, Qualified Supervisor or a Certified Operator) or have successfully completed the "Train the Trainer" course through Colorado State University, contact information for attaining licensure and CSU is provided below.
2. Train workers. EPA has developed (and our inspectors can provide) a training video that will cover basic pesticide safety information. Agricultural employers may use this video, develop their own training materials, or use other materials that contain the required basic safety information. Agricultural employers must be able to verify compliance with this requirement.

3. Provide training in a language your workers can understand. Training must be provided in a language that is understood by the workers, and the workers must be given the opportunity to have any questions about the WPS answered.

Central Posting of Information - to alert the workers and handlers of the possible risk to exposure from pesticide residues in areas where they may or will be working.

Employers are required to post information regarding pesticide use in an area that is freely accessible to workers. The following must be posted:

1. The Date and Time an application of pesticides is made for the production of an agricultural commodity.
2. The Name of the product applied, i.e. Round-Up or Tordon.
3. The Active ingredient of the product applied, i.e. Glyphosate or Picloram¹
4. The EPA Registration Number. This is located on the pesticide product label.
5. A description of the location that the application was made or the field/ range/ house identification number.
6. The Restricted Entry Interval.

The Central Posting requirements must be posted before the application of the pesticide, must be kept for 30 days beyond the end of the restricted entry interval, and every worker and handler must be aware of its location and purpose.

Provision of pesticide handler decontamination sites-

Employers are responsible for providing decontamination for pesticide handlers (the people mixing, loading and applying the pesticide). There is a distinction in the requirements for Handlers that differs from Workers. Decontamination must be located at the site of mixing and loading and must be immediately available. Handlers must be provided enough water to wash their body, a change of clothes, and soap and single use towels. Eye wash is required, only if the pesticide label requires eye protection during mixing, loading or application of the pesticide. If this is the case, then enough water is required for both washing the body and eye-flushing and must be of a quality and temperature so it does not cause illness or injury when contacting the skin or eyes,.

Workers are required to have soap and single use towels within one quarter of a mile from anyplace that they are working.

For more information, contact:

Private Pesticide licensing--Carol Barton - 303-239-4186

CSU Train-the-Trainer workshops--Sandra McDonald - 970-491-6027

Worker Protection Standard Assistance--Scott Heinley- 303-704-3912
--Brian Koontz – 303-704-3910

¹ If trade names are mentioned, it is for educational purposes, endorsement over those products not mentioned it not intended. Read and follow manufacturer's directions.